

**Reading Downtown Improvement District (DID) Authority Board Meeting  
Minutes  
March 23, 2009 - Noon  
Reading Eagle Conference Room – 345 Penn Street**

**DID Board Members in Attendance**

Larry Sundberg, Chairman  
James Snyder, Secretary  
Dan Castellani, Treasurer  
Denton Buckley, Member  
Mike Zielinski, Member

**DID Board Members Absence**

Ed Kopicki, Member  
Charles Wanyo, Member

**OTHERS IN ATTENDANCE**

Charles R. Broad, Executive Director  
Cariess Tutson, Administrative Assistant  
Joan London, Kozloff Stoudt, Solicitor

**VISITORS**

Val Lacis, Reading Eagle  
Larry Moore, City of Reading Human Relations Commission

Chairman Larry Sundberg called the meeting to order at 12:06p.m.

**PUBLIC COMMENT**

None

**REVIEW & APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

After review of the February 23, 2009 Board Minutes, with the correction to the 2<sup>nd</sup> paragraph of the Ambassador Reports stating that the Per Executive Director Charles R. Broad he does not believe that the RPA Garage checks are being documented correctly. Ambassadors allege that they do not have enough time to complete all forms, it was moved by Secretary James Snyder and seconded by Treasurer Dan Castellani, that the Board meeting minutes of February 23, 2009 be approved. The Board unanimously approved same.

After review of the March 11, 2009 Executive Session Minutes, it was moved by member Mike Zielinski and seconded by member Denton Buckley, that the Executive Session minutes of March 11, 2009 be approved. The Board unanimously approved same.

## **EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S REPORT**

### **HUMAN RESOURCES**

**Employee Handbook** – Executive Director Charles R. Broad has made the Board changes to the employee handbook. Copies of the affected pages are located in the Addendums section. It is very important that the Board adopt the new manual at the March board meeting.

**Safety & Loss Control Program** – Work on the safety and loss control program which will include a safety manual, training initiatives and an employee safety committee continues. Executive Director Charles R. Broad has a three-page list of action items to complete.

**Overtime** – Injuries to two ambassadors on the night shift required the use of overtime to meet a certain staffing level.

### **HEALTH INSURANCE**

Our current health insurance provider, High Mark Blue Cross notified us that they would be raising our premium from \$49,208 to \$64,303 or 30.68%. Mr. Broad met with VIST Insurance and we sought quotes from Gettysburg, Health America, Capital Blue Cross, and Principal. Executive Director Charles R. Broad is pleased to report that Capital Blue Cross was able to quote us \$50,417 or 2.46% increase. This is their PPO 250/100 plan. There are some higher deductibles and co-pays with the plan. The change will save us \$13,886. The new plan is effective April 1, 2009.

### **ASSESSMENTS**

Solicitor Joan London researched assessment discounts as requested at the last board meeting. She reviewed the Ordinance re-establishing the DID as a Neighborhood Improvement District in 2005. Section 4 of the Ordinance refers to the NID Act, Section (4), Subsections (5), and (10), 73 P.S. § 834 (5) and (10). The Ordinance and the NID Act sections cited do not even discuss the concept of a discount period, a flat fee period, and a penalty period. The Ordinance sets the rate of assessments for commercial and industrial properties and commercial apartment buildings; excludes residential properties, and allows and encourages tax-exempt owners within the District to provide in-kind services or a financial contribution to the Authority. Section 5(b) of the Ordinance states:

- (b) Payment of Assessment. Payment of one half of the FY 2005 assessment shall be due sixty (60) days from the date of mailing of the notice of assessment. Payment of the entirety of the assessment, beginning with sums due on January 1, 2006 and each

January 1 of each year thereafter, shall be due no later than sixty (60) days following the date of mailing of the notice of assessment.

The By-Laws give no guidance on this issue. The Municipality Authorities Act, which is an enabling law for Neighborhood/Business Improvement District Authorities, also is silent on the discount period. It does not appear that the DID has to offer the discount/flat/penalty option, and it appears discretionary.

The Board agreed to further review the 2010 change in billing terms and the date bills are mailed out in a future meeting.

### **MAIN STREET PROGRAM**

- The city administration is collecting and organizing all efforts which are focused on revitalizing Reading's core. A plan will be made available to us shortly.
- The administration believes that much of what is needed to make a difference is at the city's disposal.
- The administration views the Downtown Improvement District and Penn Corridor as major components of this effort.
- The City of Reading will apply for the Main Street designation.
- Executive Director Charles R. Broad met Managing Director Ryan Hottenstein on Friday, March 20 about this development. Mr. Broad was assured by Mr. Hottenstein that DID will be included in the press conference announcing the program initiative.

### **TREES & LIGHTING IN THE DISTRICT**

On March 9 Denton Buckley and Mr. Broad accompanied Ryan Hottenstein, Managing Director; Chief Heim; and the city's arborist Dave Ruyak on a tour of Penn Street between Second Street and Seventh Street and Franklin Street from Third Street to Sixth Street. The arborists showed us the significant progress they have made in trimming trees to raise the height above the sidewalk and to allow pedestrian lighting to reach the pavement. We were also shown trees that still need trimming and some that are slated for removal due to disease or other reasons.

The medians in the 400 and 500 blocks of Penn Street have also been trimmed and thinned to permit easy viewing from one side of the street to the other. This has also made the mid-block pedestrian cross walks safer by improving driver visibility of pedestrians.

During this tour Hottenstein advised that the city will be removing both newsstands on Penn Square. Additionally, pedestrian lighting will be installed every 60 feet on Penn Street from Second to Eleventh Street. The location of the lights will further impact the location and trimming of trees.

## **READING DOWNTOWN STREETCAR**

The Greater Reading Chamber of Commerce & Industry hosted an event on Wednesday, March 4 to issue a report on the Reading Downtown Streetcar study. The executive summary of that report is located in the addendums sections.

## **MIDDAY CAFÉ**

- MidDay Café Jazz Fest is scheduled for Wednesday, April 1, 2009 from 11:30am to 1:30pm at the Sovereign Performing Arts Center [SPAC]
- Music will be provided by the local group, “Pretzel City Dixieland Jazz Band”
- Food will feature: Savor Reading, Mezcal’s, Philly Pretzel Factory and possibly 1 or 2 more still to be confirmed
- Reading Eagle will be promoting this event with Jazz Fest activities

Since we are looking to create the “new and improved” MidDay Cafés, we have asked Reading Eagle to help design a “new and improved” logo. We should have a preliminary one sometime after Jazz Fest.

Work is in progress for the main season beginning June 5<sup>th</sup> and ending August 12<sup>th</sup>. MidDay Cafés will be every Wednesday from June 10<sup>th</sup> to August 12<sup>th</sup>, rain or shine.

WWII MidDay will be the only Friday event; it is scheduled to open the season on June 5<sup>th</sup>. City of Reading Café is in place for June 17<sup>th</sup>. Had a meeting with the County and more details should be available in the very near future.

Emphasis for the Cafés this year will be to highlight local talent – the undiscovered talent that will make these events special. So, if anyone knows of any singers, musical groups or other entertainment in their places of employment or even their families, please let us know!

Sponsorships for 2009 are beginning to fall into place: Reading Eagle has again agreed to be the title sponsor and returning from last year so far: City of Reading, Manor @ Market Place and Entech Engineering. Work is also being done to identify new sponsors. The sponsor packages are located in the Addendums section. If anyone is interested in sponsoring or has any contacts they think would benefit from exposure at a Café event, please let us know.

The D.I.D. web site has been updated.

## **2009 BUDGET**

A draft 2009 Budget is located in the Addendum Section for consideration.

## **LINE OF CREDIT**

Applications for a business line of credit have been submitted to M & T Bank and Sovereign Bank. We have accounts with both banks. Neither bank has approved the applications as yet.

## **AMBASSADOR / ENVIRONMENTAL COMMITTEE REPORTS**

Secretary James Snyder inquired why incidents in the day time such as public drunkenness and loitering have significantly increased since January 2008. Per Executive Director Charles R. Broad the numbers from January 2008 may not have been documented properly. February 2008 was not reported since it was discovered the numbers were not accurate. Secretary James Snyder requested that the 2008 numbers not be compared until they become more reliable.

The RPA Garage Checks need to reflect "Tour Not Required = X" for the Front & Washington Garage during the week since DID is only responsible for checking that garage on the weekends. The Board agreed to take disciplinary action for failure to report and perform duties when Ambassadors do not properly document the RPA checks.

Trash pick up was lower for the month of February due to snow and ice removal duty. Per member Denton Buckley the DID zone is not as clean as it use to be in prior years. At this moment DID is at full staff for what the budget allows. The Board agreed to further research the number of staff versus the performance of staff prior to hiring additional employees.

The pressure washer is back in DID's possession. All 3 vehicles are operational, the Archer Cleaning Machine is not operational and is being stored down at Goggle Works which is in need of costly repairs. Per member Denton Buckley it appears that the city has decreased their street cleaning in the DID zone. Executive Director Charles R. Broad will follow up with Public Works to confirm the street cleaning schedule in the DID zone.

## **FINANCE COMMITTEE REPORTS**

Per Treasurer Dan Castellani the DID assessments have started coming in. The legal services reported in the Finance Report seemed to be doubled compared to the Check Detail for February, 2009. Administrative Assistant, Cariess Tutson will further research the difference. The auto insurance category needs to be renamed since it includes the commercial liability insurance. Executive Director Charles R. Broad confirmed that the Pagoda account has been closed and the funds transferred.

After review of the following listed financial reports, it was moved by member Denton Buckley and seconded by member Mike Zielinski, that the below listed reports be approved.

- a. Finance Report
- b. Balance Sheet
- c. Accounts Payable/Receivable Report
- d. Check Detail

The Board unanimously approved the above financial reports.

## **OLD BUSINESS**

After review of the DID Employee Handbook it was moved by member Denton Buckley and seconded by Secretary James Snyder to approve the DID Employee Handbook with the change of issuing the Ambassadors an annual stipend of \$100 for boots and sneaker payable on May 1<sup>st</sup>. The Board unanimously approved the same.

## **NEW BUSINESS**

After review of the 2009 Budget the Board agreed to table the motion to adopt the budget until further review by the finance committee. It was moved by Secretary James Snyder and seconded by member Denton Buckley to table the approval of the 2009 Budget until further review by the finance committee. The Board unanimously approved the same.

## **EXECUTIVE SESSION**

The Board went into executive session at 1:05 pm to discuss personnel issues.

The Board reconvened at 1:32 PM. No action taken.

The Board adjourned at 1:32 pm

Respectfully Submitted,

Cariess E. Tutson  
Administrative Assistant